time!" She stopped and sighed before she went on: "But Mama said that when I was taken to the Tiznit dancers, who as you know are the most exciting and sensational in the whole of the East, I was tired and slept all through it."

The Duke laughed. "I can see, Luella," he said, "that you have had a very cosmopolitan education."

"It has certainly taken place in a great many countries," Luella answered. She was aware that he had called her by her Christian name. She thought it was because he looked upon her as a child to be protected. He obviously looked upon her rather as he did Enrico.

"I tell you what we will do," the Duke said. "Tomorrow I will invite some friends to join us, and I will take a box at the theatre."

"I would love that!" Luella cried. "Oh, thank you . . thank you!"

"Of course we may have to go to something rather dull and respectable," the Duke said. "But I hope you will manage to stay awake!"

Luella realised he was teasing her and she said: "It is the most exciting thing that has ever happened to me, so please do not forget."

"I will try not to," the Duke promised but his eyes were twinkling.

He had been thinking while he was talking that it was very unusual to find someone so enthusiastic and so full of life. He had been far too wise to associate with young girls whose Mamas were trying to force him up the aisle. But unlike Luella, they giggled and blushed if a man so much as spoke to them.

Luella had lived a very different sort of life. He knew it would be interesting to talk to her of her adventures in various parts of the world. Also he would like to show her parts of England she had not seen before.

Then he remembered that the one purpose of keeping Luella and the small boy with him was to save himself from being blackmailed. He thought how horrified his relatives would be if they became aware of the appalling difficulty he was in at this moment. They would be furious at the idea of his having to part with an enormous sum of money which would undoubtedly cripple the estate. They would be even more appalled at the thought of a scandal when he had so recently come into the title. He did not realise that he was echoing the question that was in Luella's mind as he asked: "What shall I do? What the devil shall I do?"